

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 4679

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: JEWISH LEADER LEAVES ARGENTINA AFTER THREATS

1. SUMMARY: MRS. JACOBO KOVADLOFF TOLD EMBOFF TODAY (JUNE 23) THAT HER HUSBAND HAD LEFT SUDDENLY FOR BRAZIL YESTERDAY AFTER RECEIVING THREATS AGAINST HIS LIFE. A SUBSEQUENT ANONYMOUS NOTE AND TELEPHONE CALL ORDERED HER ALSO TO LEAVE ARGENTINA WITH HER CHILDREN. SHE IS PREPARING TO LEAVE. MRS. KOVADLOFF ASKED EMBASSY AND DEPARTMENT NOT RPT NOT TO DIVULGE ANY INFORMATION ON THIS MATTER UNTIL SHE IS SAFELY OUT OF ARGENTINA. KOVADLOFFS (ALL ARGENTINE CITIZENS) MAY GO ON TO US, BUT MAY ALSO DECIDE TO WAIT OUT THEIR DIFFICULTIES IN BRAZIL.
END SUMMARY.

2. JACOBO KOVADLOFF, AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE (AJC) REPRESENTATIVE, LEFT ARGENTINA SUDDENLY FOR BRAZIL YESTERDAY (JUNE 22) AFTER BEING FOLLOWED AND RECEIVING PHONE AND LETTER THREATS AGAINST HIS LIFE. ACCORDING TO MRS. KOVADLOFF, WHO SPOKE WITH EMBOFF JUNE 23, UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS BEGAN CALLING AND LEAVING SCRAWLED NOTES IN KOVADLOFF'S APARTMENT BUILDING ON JUNE 20 ORDERING HIM TO CLOSE DOWN THE AJC OFFICES HERE AND TO LEAVE ARGENTINA "BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE." THE FIRST NOTE READ: "TRAITOR, YOU'VE PLAYED BOTH ENDS FOR TOO
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LONG. GET OUT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE. WE DON'T WANT YANKEE AND JEWISH OFFICES HERE."

3. THE KOVADLOFFS WERE APPARENTLY FOLLOWED TO THE AIRPORT AT THE TIME OF MR. KOVADLOFF'S JUNE 22 DEPARTURE AND WHEN MRS. KOVADLOFF RETURNED SHE FOUND ANOTHER NOTE, THIS TIME ADDRESSED TO HERSELF, THREATENING HER AND HER CHILDREN AND

ORDERING THEM TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY IMMEDIATELY ALSO. IN A TELEPHONE CALL SHE WAS TOLD NOT TO GO "RUNNING AROUND TALKING TO HER AMIGUITOS" WHICH SHE TOOK TO MEAN THE US EMBASSY AND OTHER KOVADLOFF CONTACTS.

4. MRS. KOVADLOFF SAID SHE BELIEVES UNCONTROLLED HOSTILE ELEMENTS OF THE MILITARY OR POLICE ARE RESPONSIBLE, AND SHE DOES NOT INTEND TO REPORT THE INCIDENT TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES-- OR TO ANYONE ELSE, INCLUDING THE ISRAELI EMBASSY. SHE ADDED THAT HER HUSBAND DID NOT BELIEVE HIS CLOSE CONTACTS WITH ADMIRAL MASSERA OR OTHER HIGH RANKING OFFICERS COULD PROTECT HIM FROM HARM.

5. KOVADLOFF HAD NOT FELT HIMSELF TO BE SERIOUSLY THREATENED BEFORE THIS INCIDENT, SHE SAID, AND SHE SPECULATED THAT HIS EFFORTS IN THE US TO BRING ATTENTION TO JACOBO TIMERMAN'S DETENTION (FORMER EDITOR TO LA OPINION) COULD HAVE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE PRESENT THREATS.

6 MRS. KOVADLOFF SAID SHE INTENDS TO LEAVE ARGENTINA AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, PROBABLY FIRST TO BRAZIL AND THEN POSSIBLY ON TO THE US. SHE ASKED THAT NEITHER THE EMBASSY NOR THE DEPARTMENT DIVULGE THIS INFORMATION UNTIL SHE IS SAFELY OUT OF THE COUNTRY. SHE ADDED THAT THE POST-GRAIVER PANIC AMONG THE JEWISH COMMUNITY HAD LARGELY SUBSIDED AND SHE WAS FEARFUL THE COMMUNITY WOULD BE AGAIN UPSET WHEN THE REASON BEHIND THE CONFIDENTIAL

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KOVADLOFFS' DEPARTURE IS KNOWN. SHE REPEATED HER HUSBAND'S FREQUENT OBSERVATION THAT ANTI-SEMITISM, PER SE, IS NOT A MAJOR HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM IN ARGENTINA, BUT RATHER, ONE MORE MANIFESTATION OF GENERAL REPRESSION AND LAWLESSNESS IN THE COUNTRY.

7. GIVEN STRONG SUGGESTION THREATS ARE PROVOCATION BY EXTREME RIGHT, EMBASSY IS SEEKING MRS. KOVADLOFF'S AGREEMENT TO CALL WITH CHARGE ON MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT TO EXPLAIN CIRCUMSTANCES AND REQUEST PROTECTION. IF THIS EFFORT DOES NOT PROSPER, SITUATION WILL CALL FOR STRONG US REPRESENTATION BEFORE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT HERE, AND TO ARGENTINE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. WE MUST, HOWEVER, MEANWHILE OBSERVE OUR PLEDGE TO RESPECT MRS. KOVADLOFF'S REQUEST FOR SECRECY UNTIL SHE IS SAFELY AWAY FROM ARGENTINA.
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